

## A MESSAGE FROM

As Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court, it is my privilege to present the 2001 Annual Report of the Illinois Courts. This Report summarizes the major Supreme Court projects initiated during the calendar year, reviews the work of the Illinois Judicial Conference and the Court's several committees, and provides a general overview of the funding and operations of the judicial system. The Report also contains a brief introduction to the various divisions of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts.

The Administrative Office, which compiles and disseminates the information in this yearly Report, is comprised of the Executive Office, Administrative Services, Court Services, Judicial Education, Judicial Management Information Services, and Probation Services. The Administrative Office functions as an arm of the Supreme Court and supports the Court in the exercise of its administrative and supervisory authority. Under the direction of Joseph A. Schillaci, the Administrative Office provides administrative and technical support, training, and other court services to all three levels of Illinois courts and serves as liaison to the Supreme Court's supporting committees. Additionally, the Administrative Office is charged with developing and implementing the Court's various projects and initiatives. A few of these deserve special mention.

During 2001, the Court continued its court improvement initiatives from previous years and instituted new projects to further this goal. One of the most important undertakings in the past year was the full implementation of several innovative Supreme Court rules designed to improve the quality of justice in the trial of capital cases in Illinois. Among the new rules announced by the Court in March 2001 was the requirement that every assistant state's attorney, public defender and private attorney representing a defendant in a capital case meet rigorous standards and become a certified member of the Capital Litigation Trial Bar.

The Trial Bar membership requirement is applicable to all capital cases filed on or after March 1, 2002. Screening committees established in each of the state's five Judicial Districts are charged with conducting a thorough review of the credentials of the applicants and forwarding them for approval to the Court. A roster of certified attorneys will be maintained by the Administrative Office. To date, the Administrative Office has received over 400 applications for certification which have been forwarded to the appropriate screening committees throughout the state.

The Court also approved a series of educational seminars for attorneys in death penalty cases and, through the Illinois Judicial Conference, established a series of educational courses to be presented at two-day seminars for judges who may be called on to hear death penalty cases in their current assignments.

The rules establishing mandatory education for trial judges hearing death penalty cases and the Capital Litigation Trial Bar are based on the work of the Special Supreme Court Committee on Capital Cases, which was appointed by the Court in April 1999. The Court's progressive actions have put Illinois at the forefront of states instituting reforms to improve the administration of justice in capital cases.

## THE CHIEF JUSTICE

Judicial education programs also remained a major focus for the Court. In addition to the regular judicial conferences and seminars organized each year, the Court approved and sponsored the Advanced Judicial Academy, geared toward experienced judges who have served five years or more on the bench. The week-long Academy was unique among judicial education events in that it was co-sponsored by the University of Illinois College of Law and held at the College of Law campus in Champaign. The theme for the Academy was *Law and Science and the Highly Effective Judge*. Given the overwhelmingly positive reception, the Court has approved another Academy to be held in 2003.

Consistent with the provisions in the Juvenile Reform Act of 1998 (Public Act 90-590), the Court continued to direct resources toward new initiatives to increase public safety and expand accountability measures for youths who commit delinquent acts. Among the projects developed are the “What Works” in reducing offender recidivism initiative and the Juvenile Probation Risk Reduction Strategy. To date, “What Works” has been implemented at five pilot sites. An anticipated fifteen or more jurisdictions will pilot the Juvenile Risk Reduction Strategy next year through the circuit court probation departments.

The Court’s ongoing development of web technology in 2001 further enhanced the efficiency of the entire Illinois court system. The Court’s web site, introduced in 2000, is continually updated and improved to provide more information on the judicial branch and additional links to numerous legal resources and organizations. Moreover, the expansion of web-based technology also improves data exchanges between all three levels of the Illinois Courts and other state agencies and local law enforcement offices. Last, the Court’s procurement of internet-based legal research through LEXIS and WEST LAW, as an additional research alternative to current online research service, has improved efficiency for staff in the reviewing courts.

The installation of digital electronic recordation in the circuit courts continued throughout the past year with overwhelming success. New digital recording systems are now up and running in nine courtrooms at the Richard J. Daley Center in Cook County, in McHenry County, and Kankakee County, to name a few. In addition, the digital recording system in Du Page County, the site of the digital electronic recordation pilot project, has been expanded to 25 courtrooms. The ongoing development of digital electronic recording in 2001 brings the Court closer to its goal of providing a record in every courtroom, thereby enhancing the entire Illinois court system.

I invite you to review the work of the Illinois Courts and the Administrative Office as contained in this Annual Report. Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Administrative Office, committee members, and to all of those who have assisted with the numerous projects and initiatives featured herein. I am confident that these ongoing efforts will continue to improve the administration of justice in Illinois.

Moses W. Harrison II  
Chief Justice